

DANIEL WEBSTER.

The Last Days of the Great Statesman. The second volume of George Ticknor Curtis' "Life of Daniel Webster" will be issued in a few days by D. Appleton & Co. From the narrative of Mr. Curtis we make the following extracts with regard to the last moments of Mr. Webster.

Interview with Professor Felton. Shortly before his death he had a visit from Professor Felton, who afterwards published the following account of it:—

On the most beautiful day of the most beautiful month in the year, Saturday, September 13, Mr. Webster, in the morning, had a visit from his son on horseback, over the estate. The air was soft and balmy, and seemed to bear healing on its wings. The great statesman was physically weak, having suffered long from his annual catarrh, and was slowly but surely undermining a constitution once gigantic in its strength. But the genial breath of heaven, and the sight of dear and familiar objects unvisited by him before his return from Washington, soothed and revived him. His eyes wandered over his extensive domain with a brightness undimmed by age or disease. Each point suggested some memory, pleasant or mournful, which he recalled with unflinching precision, and related with a fervor, freer than any which marked the most familiar conversation of Daniel Webster. The history of the former owners of the soil, the circumstances under which he became its purchaser, the improvements he had made upon it, the various incidents of the cattle and sheep he had imported and introduced there, were dwelt upon with a clearness and interest which sank deep into the listener's heart. Some of the reminiscences these scenes and objects recalled moved the illustrious narrator to tears; for he had before him the scenes of his life, associated with his earliest recollections here, and now sleeping the long sleep of death, on the spot which his name has consecrated to the deathless memory of his countrymen and the world. His voice became plaintive and low, his hands quivered as he held the reins, and for a moment it seemed as if that mighty heart would break. But the sad vision passed away, and present objects and cheerful thoughts resumed their place. His flock and herds were pointed out to the carriage, and he commented on their several qualities, not only with the knowledge of a farmer, but with the feeling of one to whom every creature of God is dear. After having pointed out, at some length, the character of the various breeds, he checked himself with a smile, and said, "How can he get wisdom that holdeth the plough and that glorieth in the good that driveth oxen, and is occupied in their labors, and whose talk is of man's life?" After a few moments' pause he added, "I do not believe that I am in any of the canonical books; it does not sound canonical; it certainly is not canonical." Mr. Webster was right. The words occur in the thirty-eighth chapter of Ecclesiastes, as the writer was amused to recollect, and he pointed to the time, on meeting his rural neighbors, he would stop to talk over with them the subjects of agriculture in which they had a common interest; and it was pleasant to witness the kindly and affectionate intercourse between the illustrious statesman and the homely neighbors and friends who—

"Along the cool, sequestered vale of life, Had kept the noiseless tenor of his way." To one who anxiously inquired after his health, he said, "I do not go to bed, for my strength is nearly gone; I can no longer get up now. I am scarcely a match for your grandson yonder." To the question, whether the love of nature grew stronger in him with the progress of time, he answered, "Yes, undoubtedly. The man who has not abandoned his love of nature, seasonally feels, as years advance and old age comes on, a greater love of mother earth, a greater willingness, and even desire, to return to her bosom, and mingle again with this universal frame of things from which he sprang." As he spoke these words, with slow and solemn tone, he seemed to look upon the face of nature as upon the face of a living being to whom he was bound by the ties of a conscious friendship and immortal love; and the soft wind, breathing with a whispering summer breeze, through the changed leaves of the neighboring trees, whispered an audible answer to the voice and look of love of the dying statesman. He had drawn his health from these scenes and had not abandoned his love of nature, seasonally feels, as years advance and old age comes on, a greater love of mother earth, a greater willingness, and even desire, to return to her bosom, and mingle again with this universal frame of things from which he sprang.

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But although he had thus withdrawn from all that world of public affairs in which his activity had been spent, he did not lose his hold upon other relations of his earthly existence, or cease to think and act upon the most minute domestic concerns with the same exact attention he had paid to them in the past. Besides his immediate family and servants, there were not more than two of his friends to whom he was tenderly attached. Mr. Harvey and Mr. Edward Curtis, his relatives, Mr. and Mrs. Paige, his son-in-law Mr. Appleton, Mr. LeRoy, a brother of Mrs. Webster, and Miss Weston, the presence of these guests, and of the medical gentlemen who attended him, made a somewhat numerous household, for whose comfort he gave directions from day to day.

On Friday morning, before he gave me the last instructions for his will, he sent for Porter Wright, directed the farm-work for the day, and gave him money to pay the laborers, and all else due in the neighborhood. And so he went on through that day, with all his great faculties and faculties under the same control that had marked his whole life; seeing, in the intervals when he was free from suffering, all who were in the house, conversing as he always had, but with a gentler and overflowing affection that seemed to grow stronger and stronger as his bodily powers sank beneath the disease which was wearing away his life. He had now become so feeble that he could sit up only for a short time. He was placed in an easy-chair, and sat with Dr. Jeffrey alone. The good Doctor fell asleep a moment, and Mr. Webster, who thought he was silent from sadness, said:—"Cheer up, Doctor; don't be sad—I shall get along." The Doctor answered:—"I was not sad, Mr. Webster; the truth is, I was in the land of nod, and you were talking to me."

His knowledge of geology was extensive and exact. He had studied the principal works upon this science on journeys made for recreation through interesting geological regions, and many years before he could be employed as a learned geologist to make a collection of specimens, and to arrange them on shelves, in the order of the successive layers in the crust of the earth, that while he lay at home he might see with his own eyes the order and arrangement of Nature. He had given much attention to physical geography, and its relation to the history of man, and to the distribution of the vegetable and animal kingdoms over the face of the earth. Among the books which he had read were Humboldt's "Cosmos" held a prominent place. He had read it through, and carefully mediated its contents. He quoted passages from it with expressions of admiration for the author's scientific acumen, his poetic beauty, and his general remarks upon the plan, substance, and details of the work showed that he understood it well, and fully appreciated its grandeur as an illustrious monument of a long and splendid scientific career. He mentioned with interest that he had seldom enjoyed, for any length of time, the society of literary and scientific men. "I have kept very bad company," he exclaimed, with a merry laugh. "I have lived among lawyers, and judges, and jurymen, and politicians, and I have never lived with nature, and in the company of the students of nature." With ichthyology he had not only a sporting, but a scientific acquaintance. His observation of the habits of the fishes in the ponds and streams of his estate, was wonderfully minute and accurate. One of the projected occupations of the leisure which he seemed about to enjoy, was to write a book embodying his personal observations on our fresh and salt water fishes; and in the last conversation I had with him, he mentioned the holding with him, he commissioned him to propound certain questions to Professor Agassiz, whose classical work on fresh-water fishes he had recently examined, on some of the facts and phenomena of ichthyology which he had called to his notice, and of which he desired to obtain a scientific explanation. Yet he seemed to have an inward consciousness that his days were drawing to their conclusion. In speaking of plans for the future, he invariably said, "My life is nearly gone; I do not know how long I can live." He had written an autobiography, he replied:—"My friends have in their possession all the facts of my life which will be of any consequence to the public to know; but perhaps, if God spares my life three or four years longer, I will do it."

Mr. Webster was much interested in political affairs during his last illness. Mr. Curtis thus relates his last reference to these matters:—

After I had returned to Marshfield that evening, I learned that another letter had been received from Mr. Webster, from a friend in the city of New York, begging that the first one, in relation to the support of General Scott's nomination, might be answered. On the following morning (Thursday) I was again with Mr. Webster, and he said, "I have a letter for you, which I found him cheerful, but very much weakened by the progress of the disease. He inquired the public news, and I told him that the State elections in Pennsylvania and elsewhere had resulted in great majorities for the Democratic party. Yes," he said, "that party will sweep the country; the Whig candidates will win one or two States; and it will be as a national party the Whigs are ended." He then spoke of his own condition, saying, "I think I shall get well, but I may not; I wish to say to you two or three things which I wish to say to you." He then asked me if I had seen the letter received on the day before from one of his friends in New York. I replied that I had not seen it, but that it seemed to me that the letter had been about which he had conversed with me previously, and which he had not answered to me, and which he was persons for whom he had great regard, I hoped that such an answer would be made. He then said:—"I wish to say to you two or three things which I wish to say to you."

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measured beat of time fell painfully distinct upon our ears; still the gentle moaning of the wind mingled with the only sound that arose within the room; for there were no sobs of women, no movements of men. So grand, and yet so calm and simple, had been his approach to the moment when we made known that he was with us no more, that he had lifted us into a composure, which, but for his great example, we could not have felt. At twenty-three minutes before 3 o'clock his breathing ceased; the features settled into a superb repose, and Dr. Jeffrey, who still held the pulse, after waiting for a few seconds, gently laid down the arm, and amid a breathless silence, pronounced the single word "Dead." The eyes were then closed, the remains were removed from the position in which death came, and all but those who had been appointed to wait and watch, slowly and mournfully walked away. Thus there passed out of this world the great soul of Daniel Webster; devoutly thankful for the good he had been permitted to do, conscious as he was of the greatness of his human power are to render up their account. Dr. Johnson is reported to have said, that "he believed hardly any man died without affection." Mr. Webster is known to have said:—"One may live as a conqueror, a king, or a magistrate; but he must die a man. The best of death brings every human being to his pure individuality; to the intense contemplation of that deepest and most solemn of all relations, the relation between the creature and his creator. Here it is the same and eternal cannot assist us; that all external and renown cannot aid us; and even friends' affection and human love and devotedness cannot aid us." In the death of Mr. Webster, it may be justly said that his own pure individuality was as distinct and complete as it was in any man who has lived. He had no actor at any time. 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